

Dear Mr. Clarke:

I attended the June 24 “listening session” at BCC on the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act. Thank you for soliciting e-mail comments from people in the audience who did not sign up to speak.

I object strongly to the premise of the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act. My major objection is to the elimination of home rule on a matter of serious interest to local communities. Global warming is a serious threat, and we need to do all we can to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel, but wiping out home rule to benefit a single industry is surely not the answer.

I wonder why the Commonwealth is prepared to fast track massive industrial wind plants when other sources of sustainable energy can be adopted more easily and perhaps at less cost. Mary Poole, chairman of the Alford Land Trust, suggested at the June 24 meeting that instead of subsidizing large wind factories the Commonwealth should require a solar panel on every building. I have two sets of photovoltaic panels on my home, and when the sun is out they work very well. Of course sun is limited. But the same is true of wind.

I am completely confused on the facts the DOER presented on June 24. We were told that ultimately there would be 1500 MW of wind energy on shore and 6000 MW offshore. Yet a few minutes later we were told that of the 44 industrial wind turbine sites currently planned for the Commonwealth, 38 of them are in the Berkshires. If the Commonwealth plans on a 4-1 ratio of wind turbines on shore to offshore, why not build them in that ratio?

Many of us believe that industrial wind turbines have a solid place in our race to control global warming. But not in all places. As Bob Dylan sang years ago, “you don’t need a weatherman to see which way the wind blows.” It blows a whole lot harder and a whole lot more on the sea coast than it does in these landlocked hills. Moreover, by placing industrial wind farms on the sea coast, the energy generated is much closer to the end users than it would be if produced here in the Berkshires.

The commonwealth says that it is serious about reducing fossil fuel energy consumption. That is commendable. But for all the subsidies that will be paid to a few huge corporate wind developers, think about what could be accomplished by redirecting those subsidies to such economic activities as weatherizing homes, sending LED lightbulbs for free to households, and installing solar panels. These are actions that would create many more permanent local jobs than is the case with building wind turbines. And far less intrusive than clear cutting 4.5 acres per turbine on ridge lines and mountain tops.

Instead of going full speed ahead to build wildly expensive and heavily subsidized industrial wind towers, the Commonwealth should work hard to help its citizens reduce their carbon footprint by reducing energy consumption. I object to the Commonwealth’s plan to bulldoze home rule, to misplace its energy resources, and to disregard our state’s distinguished history of

land conservation. I hope that the state legislature defeats this ill-suited and destructive legislation.

Sincerely,

Laurily K. Epstein

Monterey